

## **Medical Leadership Council Meeting: May 2006 (Brief Summary)**

The Medical Leadership Council on Cultural Proficiency met May 10, 2006 in Los Angeles. Convened by The California Endowment, the Medical Leadership Council's 32 members – medical specialty societies, hospitals and health systems, and advocacy groups – work to improve language access and cultural proficiency and to reduce health care disparities. They meet twice a year and conduct projects between meetings. Current work includes:

### **PHYSICIAN PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

**Network of Ethnic Physicians Organizations (NEPO):** Convened by the California Medical Association (CMA) Foundation, this group is focusing on improving health, reducing health care disparities, and increasing the diversity of those in medicine.

**National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA):** NCQA is working to promote innovative practices in plans and medical practices by awarding recognition to health plans that demonstrate innovation and improvement; awarding small grants and collaborative support to medical practices to implement quality improvement related to CLAS/disparities; and encouraging a focus on patient-centered care in primary care practices.

**Lumetra:** Through this organization, Medicare funds projects to assist small- and medium-size practices in implementing electronic health record systems to improve patient outcomes. Lumetra also offers a Continuing Medical Education program on cultural competency.

**California Medical Association (CMA):** Staff have compiled a list of volunteer interpreters, mostly in Santa Clara County, and have delivered training to bilingual staff in physician offices.

### **HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

**Scripps Mercy Hospital** reduced readmissions to the hospital after staff began reconciling pre- and post-admissions medication lists and using basic medication instructions in English or Spanish at discharge. The Cultural Competency and Linguistics Program works to improve employees' cultural competence through presentations on cultural awareness in new-employee orientations, a lunch-time multicultural health series, and brief medical Spanish classes to help employees serve patients until an interpreter arrives.

**Catholic Healthcare West (CHW)** has developed a new education and training module on cultural competence, open to all employees; is developing a dedicated interpreter

program; is tracking patients' language preferences and needs system-wide; and is conducting patient surveys by mail in each patient's language of choice.

**St. Joseph Health System** tracks patient languages system-wide; conducts staff interpreter training; negotiated a system-wide contract for telephonic interpretation; introduced language access coordinators at each facility; conducts patient satisfaction surveys about language access; and includes language access and cultural competency in physician grand rounds.

**Kaiser Permanente (KP)** compared KP's written translation process with that of other vendors and found that KP's process had the lowest error rate and a 38% lower cost. Another project is assessing whether the use of KP qualified/trained interpreters and integrated systems of language access are predictive of better patient outcomes, and the third project is developing methods to test providers' language proficiency.

**California Health Care Safety Net Institute** has awarded grants to three public hospitals – Kern Medical Center, Riverside County Regional Medical Center, and Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center – to improve language access policies and procedures. SNI is working with public hospitals to increase the use of video and speakerphone medical interpreter services. San Mateo Medical Center, Contra Costa Health Services and San Joaquin General are sharing services via video and speakerphone; San Francisco General Hospital and Alameda County Medical Center have linked their interpreters via Videoconferencing Medical Interpreting technology.

SNI, in partnership with the UCSF Center for the Health Professions, also is helping eight public hospital teams improve language access and integrate cultural competency principles into administrative and clinical practice in a variety of ways. Teams from Riverside County Regional Medical Center, Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, Santa Clara Valley Medical Center and San Francisco General Hospital are focusing their project work on language access, palliative care for Latinos, and diabetic care for African Americans.

**Sutter Health** has evaluated the language competency of 500 dual-role staff interpreters and is providing skills training. To increase access to appropriately translated patient education documents and decrease redundancy, the health system has developed an online library with 150 frequently translated patient education documents accessible by Sutter affiliates. The health system plans to select a single telephone interpreter vendor to provide services system-wide and is completing a cultural competence assessment using federal CLAS guidelines.

## **OTHER CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT PROJECTS**

A list of phone numbers for health care providers to access interpreter services at Medi-Cal Managed Care and Healthy Families health plans will be available online on the Medical Leadership Council website at: [www.medicalleadership.org](http://www.medicalleadership.org)

A summary of the number of Limited English Proficient residents in each California Assembly and Senate District is available at:

<http://www.calendow.org/reference/publications/pdf/cultural/California%20Speaks.pdf>

The Endowment will continue funding programs at the University of California (Davis, San Diego and Irvine) to assist under-represented minority (URM) students to prepare for medical school; is supporting efforts to increase nursing school faculty diversity; and is looking at ways to support cultural competency education in medical schools, residency programs, health departments and public hospitals.

**MEDICAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL WEB SITE:** Go to [www.medicalleadership.org](http://www.medicalleadership.org) (beginning in June) for a wide range of language access and cultural competency resources and tools, including a list of medical interpreters by county (in development), a Continuing Medical Education toolkit, patient education materials, and Council documents.

The next meeting of the MLC will be 15 November in Sacramento. For questions, contact Susan Hogeland via email at [Shogeland@familydocs.org](mailto:Shogeland@familydocs.org) or 415-345-8667.